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4 SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
5 JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL,
6 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
7 WASHINGTON, D.C.

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11 INTERVIEW OF: JASON VAN TATENHOVE

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15 Thursday, July 7, 2022

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17 Washington, D.C.

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20 The interview in the above matter was held via Webex, commencing at 12:05 p.m.

21 Present: Representatives Lofgren and Murphy.

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2 Appearances:

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5 For the SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE

6 THE JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL:

7

8 [REDACTED] SENIOR COUNSEL

9 [REDACTED] STAFF ASSOCIATE

10 [REDACTED] CHIEF CLERK

11 [REDACTED] INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

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14 For JASON VAN TATENHOVE:

15

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2 [REDACTED] Let's go on the record at 12:05 p.m. eastern.

3 Good afternoon, everyone.

4 This is a transcribed interview of Jason Van Tatenhove by the U.S. House Select
5 Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol.

6 Mr. Van Tatenhove, can you please state your name and spell your last name?

7 Mr. Van Tatenhove. Sure. It's Jason Russell Van Tatenhove. Last name is
8 spelled V as in Victor, -a-n, separate word, T as in Thomas, -a-t-e-n-h-o-v- as in Victor, -e.

9 [REDACTED] Thank you, Mr. Van Tatenhove. As you know, I'm [REDACTED]
10 [REDACTED] and I'm an investigative counsel with the select committee.

11 I have a couple of colleagues on the line. [REDACTED]

12 and [REDACTED] are the line.

13 And, also, we have two members in attendance right now, Representative
14 Stephanie Murphy and Representative Zoe Lofgren.

15 If any additional members or additional staff join, I'll announce them at that point.

16 Mr. Van Tatenhove, I'll just note for the record that you're here voluntarily. And
17 I just want to express my appreciation and the appreciation of our colleagues and team
18 for all of the help that you've provided us. I know this is the third or fourth time that
19 you've spoken with us, and we appreciate all of the help that you've provided all on a
20 voluntary basis.

21 I'll also note for the record that you're represented by counsel today.

22 Can counsel for Mr. Van Tatenhove please state their names?

23 Mr. Prober. Yes. It's Raphael Prober and Miranda Dore from Akin Gump.

24 [REDACTED] Great. Thank you both.

25 Because this interview is being conducted on a voluntary basis, this proceeding

1 will not be under oath, but I'll just remind you, as we do with all of our witnesses, that it is
2 unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Congress.

3 Mr. Van Tatenhove, we're happy to take a break if you need one at any point.
4 And if you'd like to talk to your attorneys, we're happy to go off the record and give you
5 an opportunity to do so. Just let me know, and we're happy to accommodate your
6 requests.

7 Mr. Van Tatenhove. Okay.

8 [REDACTED] Do you have any questions before we get started?

9 Mr. Van Tatenhove. No, I don't think so.

10 [REDACTED] Great.

11 All right. Well, let's just dive in.

12 EXAMINATION

13 BY [REDACTED]

14 Q Mr. Van Tatenhove, in your own words, who are the Oath Keepers?

15 A The Oath Keepers are a -- what I would term these days as a paramilitary
16 militia organization that started off more as an educational outreach group but, over
17 time, radicalized and became more and more of what we know of them today as the Oath
18 Keepers or a militia/paramilitary group.

19 Q Great. Thank you.

20 Why do you think someone would be drawn to joining the Oath Keepers?

21 A Well, I can only speak from my own experience, but I know that membership
22 oftentimes came from people that, in my view, were somewhat disenfranchised with life;
23 they didn't have much going on. And the Oath Keepers really kind of offered them a
24 feeling of being plugged in and connected, a chance to feel like they were doing
25 something important, so important that it could, you know, save the direction that the

1 country was going in, you know.

2 And, really, my opinion on this is, these notions that they were using to kind of
3 recruit from really were more of playing to the audience. A lot of the things that
4 Stewart Rhodes espoused publicly didn't hold up in private conversation. There were a
5 lot of things that it seemed that he didn't truly believe in but kind of catered his message
6 to to kind of maximize membership dues and donations.

7 Q Got it. That's really helpful. And I'm going to return to some of those
8 themes later on, but just want to ask about your involvement specifically.

9 So when and how were you involved with the Oath Keepers?

10 A So my involvement started back during Bundy Ranch. And that's when I
11 was an independent journalist. I was working for a small, little internet radio operation.
12 And I actually was able to become embedded with Stewart Rhodes in his vehicle as he
13 headed down for the second trip he made to Bundy Ranch. And I was there and kind of
14 in the mix with things with Stewart throughout Bundy Ranch.

15 And then I was invited to go cover the Sugar Pine Mine standoff that happened in
16 the Pacific Northwest and then the White Hope Mine standoff that happened in
17 Montana.

18 During the White Hope Mine standoff, I had been helping their what they termed
19 as a public information officer with, you know, helping them just get a press release
20 ready, and they had included my name on that press release without my knowledge or
21 permission. And so that led to me having to resign from my day job working for the
22 State of Montana.

23 However, I was offered a position -- Stewart Rhodes offered me a position as the
24 national media director -- this was in August of 2015 -- and associate editor for their web
25 page. And that began a about-a-year-and-a-half journey where I was employed by the

1 Oath Keepers -- I was never a member of the Oath Keepers; I was an employee of the
2 Oath Keepers -- that culminated pretty much at the end of 2016 and ran into 2017 little
3 bit.

4 But, as things began to become ever-radicalizing, you know, with the courting of
5 people like Richard Spencer, you know, that really raised some red flags for me, and there
6 were some incidents that led me to move on from the Oath Keepers at that point.

7 Q Got it. That's really helpful.

8 And how would you describe your relationship with Stewart Rhodes during that
9 time?

10 A I definitely had an insider's view. We worked closely together, especially
11 once -- so, once I accepted the job in August of 2015, I was moved up to the Eureka,
12 Montana, area, where I lived on property that was owned by large financial supporters of
13 the Oath Keepers.

14 And we would have daily contact. We would see each other most weeks. We
15 oftentimes would travel together to different events happening throughout the country
16 during my tenure there with the Oath Keepers.

17 So, you know -- and it's a small mountain town, so there's not a lot of social
18 outlets in a place like that. So we actually became close on an interpersonal level, just
19 as friends, really. And so I feel that kind of gave me a unique inside view to the
20 leadership of the Oath Keepers.

21 And, you know, Stewart Rhodes really is the Oath Keepers. He is the president
22 and founder and really is the person who had the vision and made all the decisions.

23 Q That's really helpful.

24 I think in one or two of our prior conversations you mentioned that Mr. Rhodes
25 actually lived with you for a period of time. Can you describe that?

1 A Yeah. So, in early to mid 2018, Stewart Rhodes was asked to leave his
2 house by his wife and children. There was divorce proceedings beginning to happen,
3 and he literally had no place else to go.

4 And, at that point in time, I had pretty much washed my hands of everything. I
5 had very much tried to just have a clean break. You know, I moved my family from the
6 property that was owned by the supporters to a separate property in the area and had
7 begun to move on with my life.

8 Stewart showed up on my front door, knocking, asking if he could stay there for a
9 little while because he had nowhere else to go, so he wound up couch-surfing in my
10 basement. And that wound up being much longer than anticipated. It wound up being
11 close to 8 months.

12 Q Got it. And have you had contact with Mr. Rhodes since then?

13 A Not -- not at all.

14 Q Great.

15 I will just note for the record that my colleague [REDACTED] also joined the
16 meeting.

17 So I'm going to go into some specific questions about the Oath Keepers and about
18 Mr. Rhodes, but, before I do that, do any of my colleagues or any of the members have
19 questions about the, kind of, scene-setting background questions that we just covered?

20 Ms. Lofgren. I don't.

21 [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you, Ms. Lofgren.

22 BY [REDACTED]

23 Q I did want to follow up on one background question just before we move on.

24 So you mentioned that there were some mounting concerns that you had about
25 the organization. Is there anything else that you'd like to add about why you left the

1 Oath Keepers and why you broke ties with Stewart Rhodes?

2 A Well, I can trace it to, kind of, this -- as I mentioned before, there was this
3 radicalization that I witnessed happening from Bundy Ranch on. And, each time, it
4 seemed to get -- each increment seemed to go further to what I would call the alt-right,
5 which was kind of a rising force in national politics and in the media cycle.

6 It came to a culmination with -- the straw that broke the camel's back, really, was
7 during a -- it was actually just a social setting, in a grocery store up in Eureka, Montana,
8 where some close associates and some longtime members of, kind of, the core group of
9 Oath Keepers were having an open discussion, and that discussion revolved around the
10 subject matter of whether or not the Holocaust was a real, legitimate piece of history.

11 And that, for me, was -- I just couldn't abide by it. And so I left that conversation,
12 went home, and told my wife I didn't care how we were going to break away but that we
13 were going to find some way to do it, that I just could no longer be involved in any way in
14 a group that was heading this direction.

15 So we, you know, within a month, found a new place to live -- and at great
16 financial hardship, I might add. You know, we were living below the poverty line. My
17 wife's [REDACTED] I have two daughters who were still in the house. So, you
18 know, at that point it didn't matter whether or not we were going to survive financially.
19 It really was just, we'll find a way.

20 So that was kind of the culmination, the point where I said, I just can't have
21 anything more to do with this.

22 Q Got it. That's really helpful.

23 And that flows well into my next question about the kind of ideology, political
24 philosophy of the Oath Keepers.

25 You know, Stewart Rhodes and a lot of Oath Keeper leaders publicly deny that

1 they're White supremacists, that they're racist. How would you describe their views on
2 race or on any sorts of social issues in the country?

3 A I think you need to break this into two different segments. I think the first
4 one needs to be what is publicly messaged out to the world and his followers, and then
5 what is discussed kind of behind closed doors.

6 Do I believe that Stewart Rhodes himself is a racist? I do not, just based on
7 personal conversations. However, I think that he is fine with selling the notion of
8 conspiracy theories like the "They will not replace us" thing that we're seeing rise in
9 prominence these days.

10 You know, a lot of the lifeblood of these communities is what the hot conspiracy
11 theories are of the day. Part of my job as associate editor for the web page was to go
12 out and find hot-button news items every morning and figure out a way that we could
13 kind of cater that messaging to potential donors and potential membership -- so, you
14 know, the immigration issues down on the southern border and whatnot.

15 You know, it's a well-known -- it's been well-known through different media
16 interviews and such with Stewart Rhodes that his mother actually came from the
17 immigrant community that worked down in the Southwest. He had related stories to
18 me of moving around a lot because his mother was working in the agricultural industry
19 kind of on a seasonal basis and that that was -- you know, that was where his true beliefs
20 came from.

21 But, you know, in the end, the messaging that he put out into the public sphere
22 was very much a radicalized message that seemed to always be increasing. And we saw
23 that when, you know, he started courting people like Richard Spencer and providing
24 security for these individuals that were obviously White nationalists and racist and, I
25 would even say, straight-out Nazis at times.

1 Q Got it.

2 I understand that a core element of the Oath Keepers philosophy is that they're
3 skeptical of government leaders. Why do you think Donald Trump was different? And
4 what about President Trump was appealing to the Oath Keepers?

5 A Well, again, this is an evolving story.

6 When President Trump originally was -- during his first election day, Stewart
7 wasn't even going to go vote. I know this because I was in communication with him and
8 saying, "Look, you gotta go down and vote." You know, it's just, Trump wasn't Hillary
9 Clinton, who Stewart had a very large disdain for.

10 But I think he saw opportunity -- and this is a theme that we'll see echoed
11 throughout the story as we move on -- he saw opportunity with the Trump
12 administration. He saw an opportunity for legitimacy in the public eye.

13 You know, I think there are a couple different factors that motivated Stewart
14 Rhodes, one of which being kind of an ego-driven fantasy of becoming a paramilitary
15 leader; the other being, obviously, money through donations and whatnot.

16 But I think that it was a relationship of convenience, and that became more and
17 more entrenched as things moved forward from the election on, that there were
18 opportunities presented for being seen as a legitimate force, for Stewart Rhodes, with
19 aligning with Trump, and that it would open doors that had been closed up until this
20 point.

21 Q Were there particular things that President Trump did or said that you saw
22 as appealing to the Oath Keepers or to Stewart Rhodes?

23 A Now, again, I need to preface that, you know, by the time Trump was
24 elected and in office, I had broken ties, so this is just my opinion.

25 But, yes, I think there was a lot that resounded with the Oath Keepers -- you

1 know, specifically the mention to the Proud Boys of "stand back and stand by." You
2 know, I think that was seen by a lot of the communities, these paramilitary/militia
3 communities, as a direct message to them that there were plans afoot and they were a
4 part of those plans.

5 I think that, you know -- I think the administration, in my opinion, tried to reach
6 out and open lines of communication with these militia groups.

7 Q Can you expand on that?

8 A I can. And, again, this happened after I had broken ties, but I was still kind
9 of in the loop as far as information-sharing with different people within that community.

10 I had received a call after I had left the Oath Keepers talking about a specific
11 meeting outside of Pahrump, Nevada, I believe it was, where Roger Stone was going to
12 be -- had asked to have an impromptu meeting with some militia leaders, including the
13 Bundys.

14 And, you know, they had actually invited -- wanted to see if I wanted to go out
15 there as a representative of the Oath Keepers. It was fairly -- you know, I explained that
16 I had nothing to do with them now and was not interested whatsoever.

17 But I thought it was telling that -- and certainly concerning -- that someone so
18 close to the campaign at that point would be reaching out to, you know, known militia
19 members that had taken stands previously, with, you know, firearms involved, both on
20 private property and on Federal property. So it certainly was a concerning thing to me
21 and something that stuck with me.

22 I don't really have much information beyond that. I know it's all hearsay, but,
23 you know, I do think there is truth to it.

24 Q Do you recall what the purpose of that meeting was, or the stated purpose?

25 A From my understanding, my recollection, it was just to open lines of

1 communication, kind of almost like a meet-and-greet. And, other than that, I really
2 don't know.

3 Q Got it. And were you told anything about whether it was on behalf of the
4 campaign?

5 A I did not. No.

6 Q Okay. Got it.

7 So I want to ask specifically about a theme that emerged in 2020 in Stewart
8 Rhodes' rhetoric.

9 So, as I'm sure you've seen, leading up to January 6th, Stewart Rhodes described
10 repeatedly in public that he wanted President Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act and
11 call up an unorganized militia that would've included the Oath Keepers.

12 Did Mr. Rhodes ever discuss the Insurrection Act with you at the time that you
13 were in touch?

14 A He mentioned it briefly and in passing. I didn't know too much about what
15 the Insurrection Act was at the time. But he was -- it seemed like his end game was
16 always kind of heading towards becoming a paramilitary figure, kind of almost like a folk
17 hero figure. And so it certainly falls in line with his character and what I saw of it,
18 anyway.

19 Q So, you know, I'll preface this question by acknowledging that I know you can
20 only offer your thoughts in the context of your prior conversations with Mr. Rhodes.

21 But, you know, if step number one is President Trump invoking the Insurrection
22 Act, what is step number two as it relates to Stewart Rhodes and the Oath Keepers?

23 A Well, again, this would just be my opinion and thinking out loud really. But,
24 really, we've seen Stewart talk about and, you know, put into place quick reaction forces
25 before.

1 And, you know, heading to the U.S. Capitol with a military force, in military
2 formations, dressed as a military does, with military-grade firearms and weapons,
3 obviously I think that means that he was willing to move forward with trying some sort of
4 violent takeover of the U.S. Government.

5 Q Uh-huh.

6 A And, again, that's just me theorizing.

7 Q Sure.

8 You know, you talked earlier about how, you know, President Trump presented an
9 opportunity to Mr. Rhodes. Can you expand on that in the context of what you have
10 seen reported publicly about January 6th and about the actions of the Oath Keepers?

11 A I think that -- again, just theorizing -- I think that lines of communication
12 probably were successfully opened at some point in time after my tenure. I think there
13 probably was communication in some aspect, whether it was directly with Trump or just
14 members of his circle. Obviously, we saw that certain Oath Keepers provided Roger
15 Stone with security there at the Stop the Steal rally before the events at the Capitol
16 Building.

17 So, you know, I think that there definitely was communication happening. And,
18 as far as how much it was planned out, obviously we saw the footage with Oath Keepers
19 leadership, Stewart Rhodes himself, and Enrique Tarrio down in the basement. Whether
20 that was just a platitude, I don't know. You know, whether it was just kind of
21 acknowledging that both groups were there or if it was more in-depth planning, that's
22 something I don't really know much about.

23 But, obviously, there were different groups there and involved, and they were
24 there for a reason. And I think the speeches that Trump put forward and the messaging
25 that had been happening on Twitter and in social media really paints a stark picture as to

1 what their intentions were.

2 Q Great. That's very helpful.

3 So what I'd like to do is -- so the select committee has obtained several encrypted
4 chats from Stewart Rhodes in the weeks leading up to January 6th. I'd like to just read
5 out loud a couple of them and kind of get your reaction to them in the context of what
6 you know about Stewart Rhodes' messaging in the past and the conversations you've had
7 with him, kind of have you interpret or translate based off the fact that you were the
8 former spokesman of the Oath Keepers.

9 Does that sound okay?

10 A Yes.

11 Q So, in one message from December 2020, Stewart Rhodes wrote to the
12 Florida Oath Keepers, quote, "We need to push Trump to do his duty. If he doesn't, we
13 will do ours. Declare independence, defy, resist, defend, conquer, or die. This needs
14 to be our attitude," end quote.

15 So, Mr. Van Tatenhove, how do you interpret that quoted message in the context
16 of what you've heard Mr. Rhodes say in the past?

17 A It falls right in line with his messaging, though more extreme. Usually
18 Stewart's very measured in his public responses. And, obviously, this wasn't a public
19 response, but, you know, Stewart, being a Yale-educated lawyer, is very good at toeing
20 the line between what will get him in trouble and what won't, which is why we haven't
21 seen any repercussions for the actions previously.

22 But, really, that -- you know, he seems more emboldened and felt that he could
23 push the line, obviously, to something that seems more of an insurrection in and of itself.
24 You know, the words speak for themselves, in that it seems that he's calling for a
25 revolution, and if the President's not gonna do it, that doesn't matter; we're gonna go

1 forward and do it anyway, do it on our own.

2 Q Great. Thank you.

3 In another message -- and this was from December 29, 2020, so just a couple of
4 days before January 6th -- Stewart Rhodes sent a private message to another individual
5 saying the following:

6 Quote, "This will be D.C. rally number three. Getting kind of old. They don't
7 give a shit how many show up and wave a sign, pray, or yell. They won't fear us till we
8 come with rifles in hand. Only reason to go is so Trump knows we support him in taking
9 our gloves off and kicking ass. That's why I'm going. It's to send him a message, not
10 Congress. I'm done talking to them."

11 Mr. Van Tatenhove, how do you interpret those messages in the context of what
12 you've heard Mr. Rhodes say in the past?

13 A I think it's him using pressure through membership ranks to try to put a
14 message out to the Trump administration saying, "Look, we want you to do this, and if
15 you're not gonna do it, we're gonna do it anyway."

16 You know, again, he -- I think it was a relationship of convenience. And he may
17 have been worried about Trump wavering in the moment, and trying to shore up his own
18 troops, so to say, and kind of get them ready for what he had envisioned happening on
19 January 6th.

20 Q Did you ever hear the Oath Keepers discussing violence against politicians?

21 A I certainly heard Stewart brainstorming about violent acts, specifically
22 intimidation, not necessarily -- you know, he never spoke about outright, you
23 know -- other than in the public papers he did, where he would talk about hanging Hillary
24 Clinton by the neck for treason.

25 But there were projects he would bring to me that certainly intimidated violent

1 actions.

2 One of the first projects he wanted me to do on a graphics level was create a card
3 deck, much like we saw in the Gulf War where we had different generals and people that
4 were wanted by the U.S. military, Armed Forces, where they would create a playing card
5 deck with, kind of, the who's who of who they wanted to bring in and get rid of. And he
6 wanted to do that with people such as Hillary Clinton.

7 And that's a project I just outright refused to do. But it does show that he
8 certainly was thinking in military terms and using similar propaganda techniques to kind
9 of instill a sense of, "Violent actions need to be taken."

10 Q Got it. Do you remember any of the other politicians who would've been
11 featured on those cards?

12 A I don't, not off the top of my head.

13 Q No worries.

14 Did the Oath Keepers ever provide weapons to members?

15 A They certainly provided ammunition. I don't know if they provided actual
16 weapons.

17 But I can tell you that, when I first went down to Bundy Ranch, one of the pit stops
18 we made along the way was to -- it was in the middle of the night, so I really had no idea
19 where we were. I think it was in Clinton, believe it or not, Montana, somewhere,
20 where -- a horse trailer had been following us, with a large pickup truck, and we had
21 stopped in the middle of the night to load up on storable food and such, but there was a
22 large amount of ammunition that was also put into the vehicle.

23 I know that there was also a storefront in Kalispell, Montana, where ammunition
24 was available for those who may have needed it and were given out freely at the time.

25 So, yeah, ammunition was certainly given. As far as weapons themselves, no. I

1 do know there were a couple of FLIR units -- forward-looking infrared -- scopes that were
2 donated that Stewart had talked about and showed me in the car ride down to Bundy
3 Ranch.

4 But, other than -- there were raffles and fundraising events where AR-15s and
5 assault rifles were offered up as the prizes for these membership drives.

6 Q Got it. That's really helpful.

7 So we've heard testimony from some rioters from January 6th that President
8 Trump's focus on January 6th really deeply influenced their decision to come to D.C., that
9 they thought the date was important but the events were important because of President
10 Trump, that his messages on social media had a powerful impact on them, and that
11 people felt disillusioned and unheard and that President Trump took advantage of those
12 feelings.

13 You know, based on your experience with Stewart Rhodes, in your view, how did
14 far-right leaders like Stewart Rhodes take advantage of that kind of disillusionment that
15 the rioters have described?

16 A Absolutely. And that's something that goes back to my first days with the
17 Oath Keepers. You know, much like we see with actual Nazi groups that are recruiting
18 membership, you know, they're going after disenfranchised people.

19 Now, the Oath Keepers certainly talks a lot about having a large military base, as
20 far as retired military, you know, veterans and such. Most of those members, in my
21 experience, have been non-combat veterans, that they fulfilled more administrative jobs.
22 And a lot of them didn't have -- again, as I said earlier, didn't have much going on in their
23 lives. They felt unheard.

24 He really played along the vibes of rural and urban communities and the feeling
25 that rural communities just are not being heard by their State and national lawmakers.

1 And that was part of the initiative, really, to gain membership, was to play on those
2 feelings of isolation and not being heard and really, you know, trying to find people that
3 needed something to live for, and present them with, "Hey, well, we're doing this. You
4 can come plug in with us and, you know, be a part of something historic, be a part of
5 something important that's going to help save this country."

6 Q So, in the weeks leading up to January 6th, just based off of what you saw
7 and your familiarity with this community, were you concerned that President Trump was
8 tapping into those same feelings that people like Stewart Rhodes had exploited?

9 A Absolutely. I see a lot of similarities with the tactics that President Trump
10 used and Stewart Rhodes and other leadership figures amongst these different
11 communities. They seem to all be reading from the same playbook. You know, a
12 lot -- they all, you know, tie in with the same type of propaganda and social media usage
13 that we see coming out of InfoWars and Alex Jones's outlet, and a lot of the talking points
14 are very, very similar.

15 So, yes, I see this as, kind of, you know, a group of people that saw places where
16 they could take advantage of people's feelings. And, you know, that's an old tried and
17 true technique within the media, to, you know, touch upon these emotional hothouses
18 and use that to try to further their own agendas.

19 Q Were you concerned about the temperature of things or the way that things
20 were headed leading up to January 6th?

21 A I was, but I will say that I underestimated things. You know, having an
22 inside view for so long, I felt there was -- there was a certain amount of incompetence,
23 and, you know, it just seemed like there wasn't much that could happen there. And yet
24 there they were, you know, in some of the most iconic, historic moments of our country
25 thus far, you know, running up the stairs of the U.S. Capitol in a stacked, military wedge

1 formation.

2 So I underestimated them, and I was wrong in doing so, I think, in that, you know,
3 they were able to garner enough support and people to literally head up to the Capitol in
4 a stacked formation.

5 So, you know, I think -- I feared for what may have been -- what may have
6 happened if there was someone a bit more competent at the helm. And, thankfully, we
7 got lucky. But lucky is not a good survival tactic. You know, I fear for where the
8 country may be going in the future.

9 Q So what was different about January 6th and the lead-up to January 6th?
10 You know, you described how there was this strain of incompetence among the Oath
11 Keepers. What was different this time, based off of your, you know, perspective as an
12 outside observer?

13 A The rhetoric had certainly become much more extreme -- the rhetoric, the
14 messaging. You know, it just seemed like the whole world was becoming more extreme,
15 and Stewart in his messaging was keeping pace with that, if not trying to lead the pack.

16 And, you know, I think it's just, again, tying into what the hot-button issues of the
17 day are. You know, those were the hot-button issues of the day, and Stewart was using
18 them to great effect, to motivate people to go to the Capitol and to attempt an assault on
19 it.

20 So, you know, it was a continuation of this, you know, ever-growing extremism
21 that was just -- you know, it seemed to be in this echo chamber and just growing and
22 growing.

23 Q So, when you say the rhetoric was heating up and that, you know, Stewart
24 and others were taking advantage of it, are you talking about President Trump's rhetoric?

25 A President Trump's, Stewart's rhetoric, everybody's. It seemed like all of it

1 was rising in temperature.

2 Q Got it. That's really helpful.

3 Let me pause here and see if any of my colleagues or any of the members have
4 questions.

5 Okay.

6 We actually, you know, speeded through the main questions that I wanted to
7 cover. We had a multi-hour conversation the last time around, and I just wanted to
8 return to a couple of points today.

9 Are there things that you observed about January 6th or President Trump's
10 influence on the Oath Keepers that we haven't covered today?

11 A You know, I think the main takeaway I took from it was, especially with the
12 information that's come out afterwards with the encrypted messaging and such, that, you
13 know, it seemed that President Trump had influenced and kind of given the green light
14 for these people, but, really, the fact that they were willing to move forward even after
15 President Trump seemed to pause and even step back and not go to the Capitol himself,
16 and, you know, with Stewart's messaging saying, you know, "We're gonna do this
17 anyway" and trying to implore him, I mean, that shows me once again a ratcheted-up
18 escalation of what they're willing to do. And, for me, that was a very concerning point.

19 Q You know, you're someone who, by speaking out against a group that you
20 were formerly involved with, you've demonstrated a lot of courage in doing so, at, you
21 know, potential personal risk.

22 What is your message to people who came to January 6th and may have some
23 feelings of regret? What would you say to them?

24 A I would say, as someone who has been in the mix, got swept up a bit, but
25 then walked away, that there are exit ramps, that you don't have to continue to

1 participate in these echo chambers where -- you know, you need to look at the end
2 games of things and what country we wind up living in and what country our children and
3 our grandchildren wind up living in, and is this really going the direction you want it to
4 go? That there are ways to get away from this, and that you can still have a life where
5 you feel valued and plugged in and doing important things, without, you know, falling for,
6 really, the fundraising scams and the personal agendas of the leadership of some of these
7 communities. That you don't have to be a follower, you can resist it and say "no" and
8 work towards a better future that's better for everybody all around.

9 [REDACTED] Great.

10 Any questions from colleagues?

11 Or, Ms. Lofgren, I saw you came off mute a little earlier. Wanted to make
12 sure you had the platform, if you wanted it.

13 But, if not, Rafi, Miranda, is there anything that you think we didn't cover that
14 you'd like to get out there?

15 Mr. Prober. No. I think you've covered everything. So, yeah, very
16 comprehensive, from our perspective.

17 I'd only ask, I mean, Jason, you know, based on all the conversations you've had
18 with the committee, whether there was anything else that you felt like was important to
19 communicate at this point.

20 Mr. Van Tatenhove. No. I think, between the different meetings we've had and
21 interviews, that we've really had a very comprehensive overview of my experience and
22 my views on this particular group.

23 [REDACTED] Great.

24 All right. Well, unless there's anything else, we'll go off the record at 12:45 p.m.
25 eastern.

1 [Whereupon, at 12:45 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

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Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

Witness Name

Date